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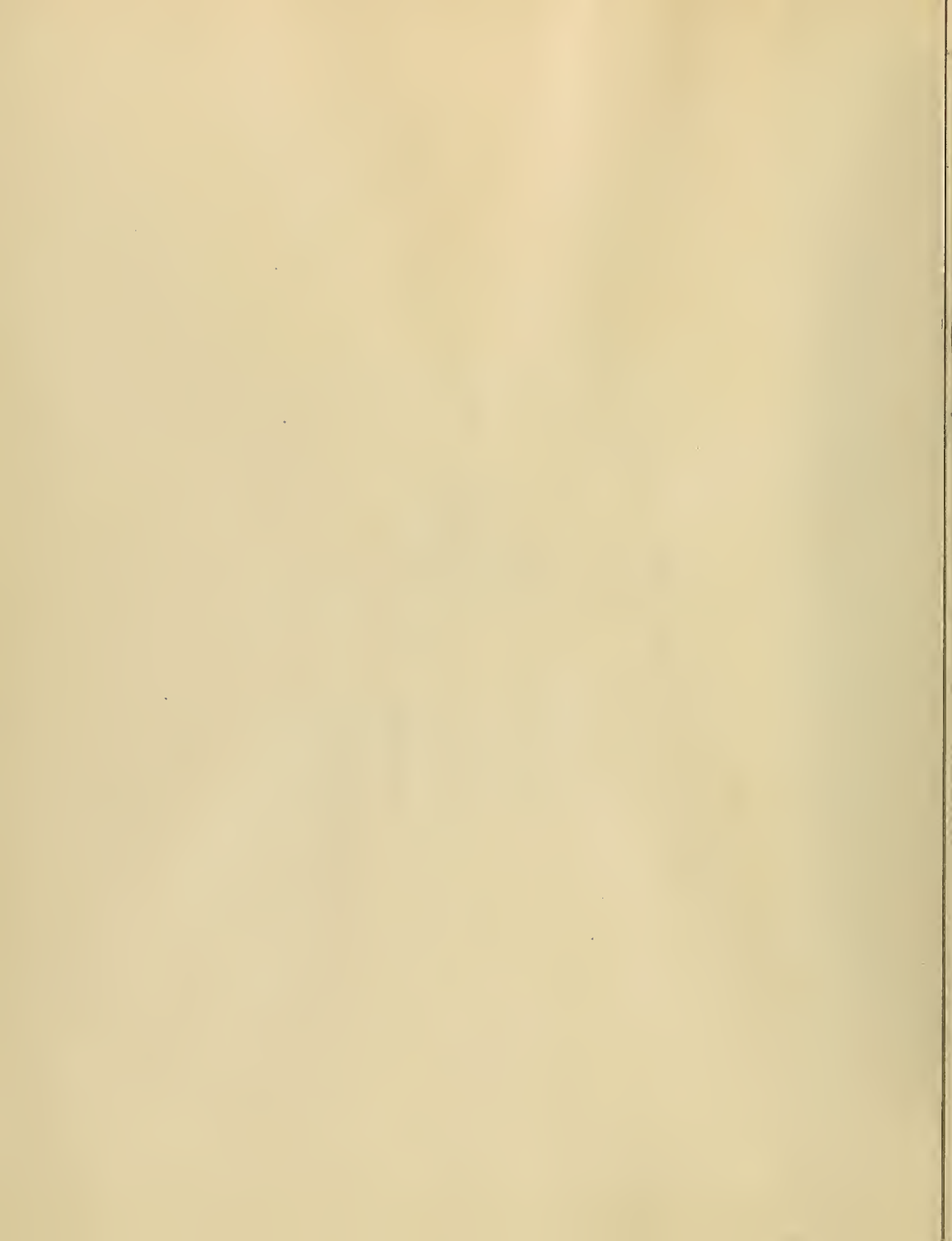
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A Report to the Redevelopment Agency
of the City and County of San Francisco

REDEVELOPMENT IN THE JOHN McLAREN PARK AREA

A description of existing conditions
of arrested development and a re-
port concerning the designation of
the John McLaren Park Area as a
Redevelopment Area.

Prepared by

San Francisco Department of City Planning

100 Larkin Street

San Francisco 2, California

July 1951

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SECRETARY

June 28, 1951.

Redevelopment Agency of the
City and County of San Francisco
512 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco 2, California

Gentlemen:

The attached report has been prepared in response to the request contained in your Work Order of October 18, 1950 and as authorized by your Resolution No. 25 of October 3, 1950.

The Department of City Planning has made the requested study of the question of recommending designation of the John McLaren-Candlestick Point section of San Francisco as a redevelopment area.


The findings and conclusions of the study are presented herein for consideration by your Agency.

The Department acknowledges with great appreciation the cooperation and assistance extended by your Agency and by other departments of the city government in the preparation of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest J. Torregano, President
City Planning Commission

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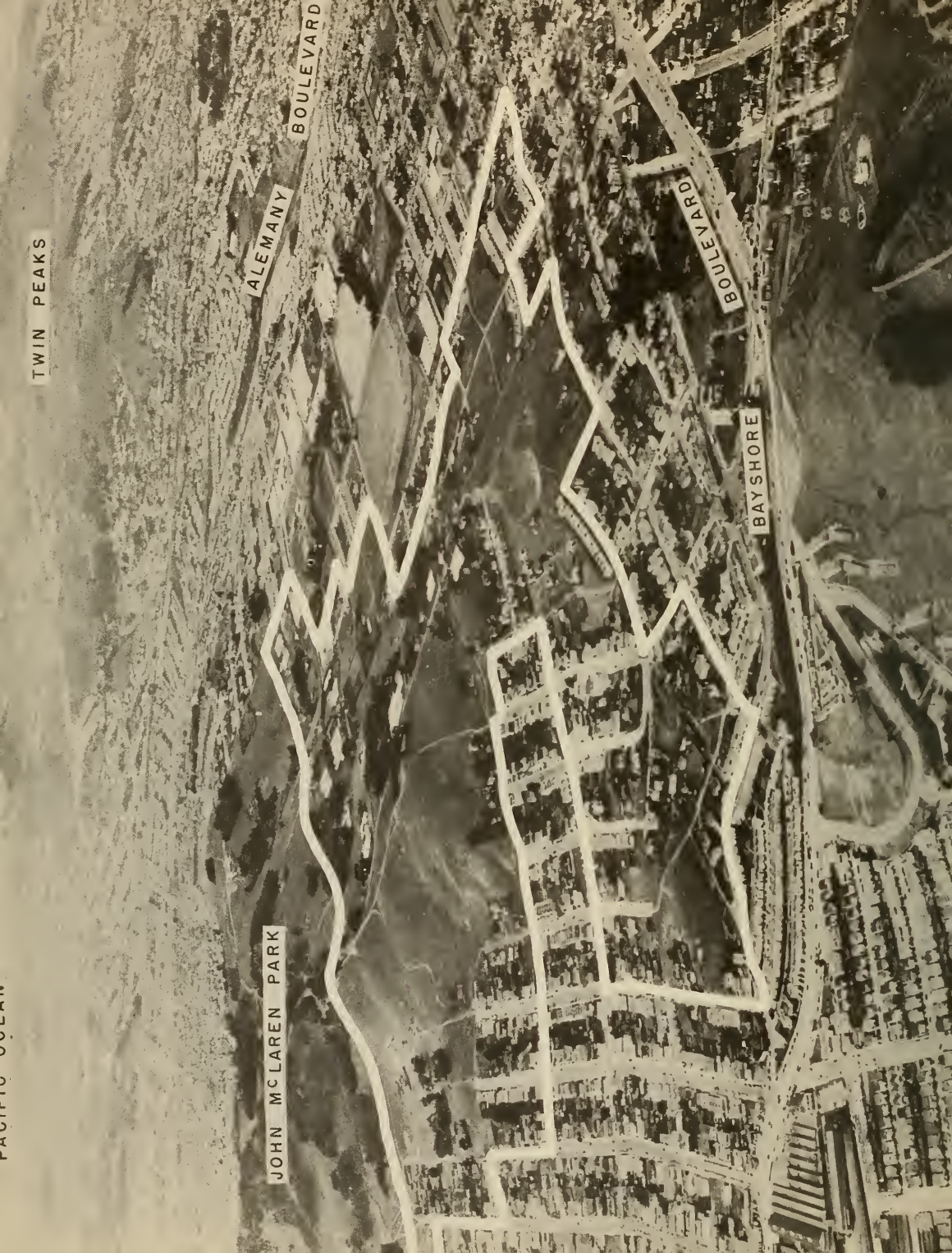
JOHN MCLAREN PARK

ALEMANY

BOULEVARD

BOULEVARD

BAYSHORE



AERIAL VIEW OF THE JOHN McLAREN PARK AREA SHOWING THE
APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY OF THE PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT AREA

This view shows the John McLaren Park area and the southeast portion of San Francisco. The sections of vacant, unbuilt land proposed for redevelopment are located between the park and Bayshore Boulevard.

Included in the proposed redevelopment plan is a new boundary for the John McLaren Park with a perimeter drive to provide better access to the park and the adjacent areas.

Under the proposed plan certain mapped but unpaved streets would be replanned to provide streets of easy grades fitted to the steep hillsides. Several new schools and small shopping centers are also proposed. Very few, if any, of the existing buildings would be disturbed.

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Within the boundaries of the John McLaren Park-Candlestick Point study area described by the Redevelopment Agency, one area is suitable to be recommended for designation as a Redevelopment Area. This area is located on the east side of John McLaren Park between the Park and Bayshore Boulevard. It is blighted under the terms of the California Community Redevelopment Act and lends itself to a unified plan meeting the requirements of the Act. The area has been outlined on the basis of the following findings:

1. The area was originally-subdivided as early as 1863 and 1867, in a gridiron pattern unsuited to the hilly terrain. As a consequence, though lots were sold, little building has taken place on the hilly sections of these early subdivisions. Over 70 acres of land lie unused because of improper subdividing.
2. The easterly side of the John McLaren Park area is in an arrested condition of development and conforms to the definition of a blighted area as stated in the Community Redevelopment Act.
3. With a minimum amount of disturbance of existing buildings redevelopment would bring into use this presently unusable property, which has been in an arrested condition of development.
4. The redevelopment of the John McLaren Park Area, through combined public and private initiative will effectuate the purposes of the Community Redevelopment Act. Private enterprise alone cannot effectively accomplish land assembly and replatting of streets in this area where ownership is divided among numerous owners and where platted streets are improperly related to the requirements of development.
5. A final determination of John McLaren Park boundaries and adequate provision for access to the area by a proposed John McLaren Parkway are essential to redevelopment of the area. Also related are proper planning of the four school sites and the realignment of certain streets. The cooperation of public agencies as well as private owners is necessary for a better overall development in the area.
6. Redevelopment of the area would provide room for from 1,000 to 1,500 dwelling units in an attractive part of San Francisco, convenient to working areas. These homes would include some detached houses, row houses, and garden type apartments.
7. Redevelopment would give many of the present land owners an opportunity to increase the value and usability of their land by direct participation in the overall redevelopment plan.



THE VACANT LAND IN THESE AREAS OF
SCATTERED DEVELOPMENT CAN BE
MADE MORE DESIRABLE FOR BUILDING
THROUGH REDEVELOPMENT.

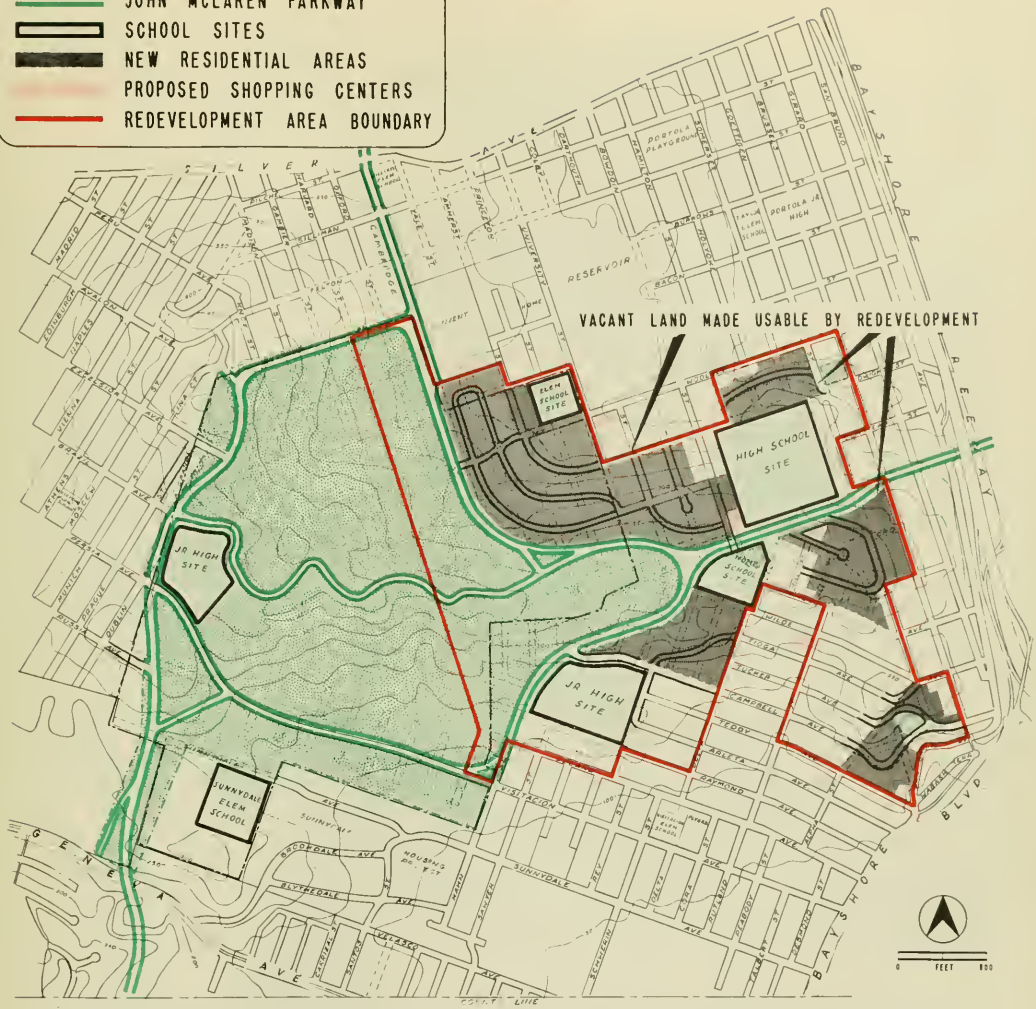


OPPORTUNITY FOR REDEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA ACCORDING TO A UNIFIED PLAN

In order to indicate the type of development which could be accomplished through the redevelopment process in the John McLaren Area, a general site plan has been prepared. Since detailed site planning studies cannot be made in detail until accurate topographic information is available, this general plan may serve to indicate the general results that can be obtained.

1. Redesign of certain mapped, but unpaved streets would provide local access streets with easy grades fitted to the steep hillsides.
2. New residential land would be opened up by modifying the boundaries of John McLaren Park and by new street designing. Over 70 acres of presently blighted land now vacant would be made available for development, providing space for approximately 1,000 to 1,500 dwellings.
3. Approximate locations for neighborhood shopping centers are shown at a number of points: University and Woolsey Streets, the general vicinity of Rutland and Wilde Avenues and at the westerly end of Arleta Avenue. With more dwellings built on the new residential areas which will be created, other centers may be necessary such as in the general location of Mansell and Bowdoin Streets and Mansell and Mill Streets.
4. Four school sites proposed by the Unified School District to provide public schools for all levels of learning have been designated for the area. Some adjustment in these sites is shown in the general site plan in order to improve their accessibility.
5. Two new neighborhood playgrounds of approximately one acre each are indicated at Goettingen and Dwight Streets and between Tucker and Campbell Avenue. Also, the upper portion of the Delta-Wilde Home School site is shown for possible use as a neighborhood playground.
6. Establishment of new official boundaries for John McLaren Park based upon the location of a perimeter drive. This includes adjustment of the park boundary on the south side near Geneva Avenue to allow for better access and, on the east side includes a hilltop desirable for proper park development. A total of approximately 46 acres would be released for residential purposes and the total park area reduced from 318 to 288 acres as recommended in the John McLaren Park Report of the Department of City Planning in January, 1950.
7. A parkway to serve as a perimeter drive for the Park and as one link in the proposed John McLaren Parkway, a distance of approximately 4-1/2 miles, to connect John McLaren Park with the Lake Merced Area. This parkway would also provide better access to the Park and the proposed new high school, and continuing easterly on Mansell Street across the Bayshore Freeway, it would serve as a connector for the area east of Third Street.

- JOHN MCLAREN PARK
- JOHN MCLAREN PARKWAY
- SCHOOL SITES
- NEW RESIDENTIAL AREAS
- PROPOSED SHOPPING CENTERS
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA BOUNDARY



JOHN McLaren PARK AREA PLATE

GENERAL SITE PLAN I

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

I. THE STUDY AREA

Location and General Description

The area selected for study of the existence of blight or arrested growth under the terms of the California Community Redevelopment Act, is located in the southeast section of San Francisco in the general vicinity of John McLaren Park and Candlestick Point. This area is shown on the facing location map and in more detail on Plates 4 and 5.

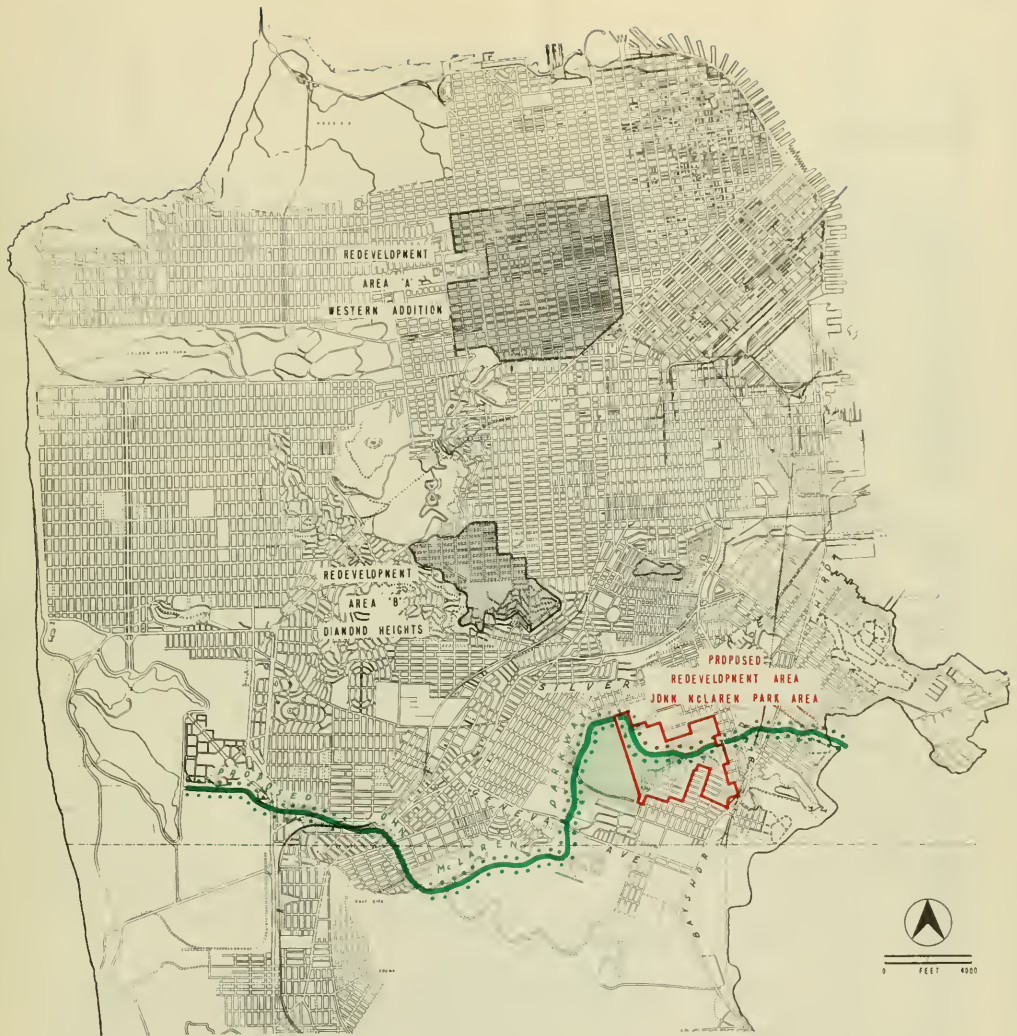
The area was chosen by the Redevelopment Agency for detailed analysis based on city-wide studies by the Department of City Planning, which indicated general areas in which redevelopment might take place. This general study, based primarily on the Real Property Survey of 1939, found that extensive areas of built-upon land demonstrated the existence of sub-standard conditions and blight and that a second type of area, predominantly vacant was, in fact, blighted in the sense that its development had early been arrested by reason of certain conditions and faulty planning.

The two types of redevelopment areas have been officially recognized in San Francisco by the Board of Supervisors - 1) by the designation in 1948 of the Western Addition, a typically blighted developed area, as Redevelopment Area A; and 2) by the designation in 1950 of the Diamond Heights area as Redevelopment Area B. The latter area is an example of arrested growth due to inappropriate street pattern, scattered ownership and haphazard early development.

The third area selected for present study includes John McLaren Park, Bay View Park on Candlestick Point and certain land on their perimeters. It has a total area of 1,075 acres or 1.6 square miles. Its boundaries for study purposes are in general: Silver Avenue on the North; Geneva Avenue and the south line of Bay View Park on the South; Vienna Street on the West; the Bay on the East.

The study area comprises two ridges or series of hills rising to 450 feet above sea level and divided by the Bayshore Freeway. The occasional driver who makes his way to the various unbuilt hilltops in the area finds himself isolated from the busy city that surrounds him. Persons who visit the area for the first time often remark that this is "way out in the country" because of the open, rural character.

The residential areas have developed up the easy slopes of the hillsides, thinning out toward the summit. The most intense development is centered about the shopping areas at Bay Shore Boulevard at Sunnysdale Avenue, and San Bruno Avenue at Silver Avenue.



JOHN McLAREN PARK AREA PLATE

LOCATION 2

SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING

II. EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Subdivisions:

There was considerable subdivision activity in the John McLaren Park-Candlestick Point area during the latter part of the last century. However, these early subdivisions were poorly planned and unsuited to the hilly topography. Many unbuildable blocks and lots and streets with excessive grades resulted. The character of these early subdivisions has been an important factor in arresting development of the area.

Originally, the John McLaren Park - Candlestick Point area was part of two ranchos granted by the Governor Alvarado in 1840 when California was a part of Mexico. In the John McLaren Park area, subdivision maps were filed starting in 1863 with the University Mound Survey. The University Homestead Association filed maps in 1867, 1868, 1869 and 1870; Visitacion Valley Homestead Association, 1868; Haley Purchase, 1869; Paul Tract Homestead Association, 1871; Sunny Vale Homestead Association, 1873; and the Reis Tract, 1904.

In the Candlestick Point area, the Bay View tract subdivision map was filed in 1867. In 1915 the city accepted and dedicated the 30 acre hilltop as Bayview Park after receiving various parcels of land in 1902 and 1910.

The City College of San Francisco, once known as University College, had purchased a location in the area in the early sixties for a new campus, hence the name "University Mound". Promoters seized on the college's proposed move as an attraction for potential purchasers, but plans were changed and the college located elsewhere. A boys' boarding school was actually built and operated until 1884 when the University Mound Old Ladies' Home took over the school's buildings. The Convent of the Good Shepherd bought land from the Home and opened a school for girls in 1932.

The real estate activities of the sixties were exemplified by the University Homestead Association, whose shareholders acquired four 25' by 120' lots for \$300 in twenty-nine monthly payments. The promotion material published in 1867 described the area in glowing terms. Although the ownership of the land was thus widely distributed in small parcels, until the turn of the century most of the land in the area remained as farmland and much of it is used today for greenhouses and gardens. As the city grew toward the south, it followed the highways and filled up the valleys, leaving the hills of the area undeveloped.

Daniel H. Burnham made recommendations for the treatment of the University Mound area in his 1905 "Report for a Plan for San Francisco". Burnham suggested that the low range of comparatively unbuilt-on hills between Islais Creek and Visitacion Valley be developed with a new street system using contour streets where the grades were too steep for development in the checkerboard or gridiron pattern. He proposed that a large part of the area be used for park purposes at the approximate present locations of John McLaren Park and Bay View Park.

The Burnham Plan for the area was never carried out, and the original gridiron pattern for the streets has remained. Just before the first World War the southern slopes of the area were partially developed in a mild building boom which soon subsided. On the northern slopes few of the platted streets have been put through or paved, although within the last year a number of steep streets have been paved.

John McLaren and Bay View Parks

Ever since 1926, when the Board of Supervisors voted to acquire 550 acres of land for John McLaren Park, titleholders in the University Mound area have not had a clear understanding of the status of their property.

The 1926 plans for John McLaren Park called for an 18-hole golf course as well as equestrian trails and playfields. The possibility of moving the zoo to the new park was considered. In 1928 the city began to acquire property, but a two million dollar bond issue to complete the purchase and to equip the park was defeated in the same year. The next year when the city again began buying lots out of general funds, a taxpayers' suit was filed to halt proceedings. The suit failed after months of litigation. Subsequently, the city continued to buy scattered parcels from private owners.

In 1932 the area was reduced by the Park Commission to 421 acres, and later to 361; finally in 1946 the Board of Supervisors established the present boundary containing 318 acres, of which the city now owns 262.4 acres. The recommendation of the Department of City Planning made in 1950 after study of the park and its potential uses and access is for a 288 acre park with certain parkway roads. Plate 3 shows these various boundaries and Plate 1 indicates the proposed park drives.

These changing policies of the City over the years have left title holders in the John McLaren Park section uncertain of the future of their land. The City implied an intent to buy the land but had no money or did not offer what the property owners considered a fair price. And the property owners could not realize their investment by reselling since there were few purchasers of property of such uncertain status. A similar effect has been noted around Bay View Park, where insufficient knowledge of city purposes has retarded development of the sloping property below the park hilltop.

Meanwhile, the change in John McLaren Park boundaries and the reduction in area progressively has excluded from the Park some of the best view points in the city - hilly, unbuildable land - while retaining certain buildable land. The present boundaries, as established by the Board of Supervisors in 1946 would be changed to provide for a better development and use of the Park in relation to surrounding terrain according to the recommendations of the Department of City Planning as contained in its report of January, 1950. The boundary recommendations contained in that report are shown on Plate 3 and differ only slightly from the boundary suggestion as shown on Plate 1. The exact location of the perimeter drive and boundary is subject to final determination after more accurate topographic information now in the course of preparation is obtained.

John McLaren Park has been left largely in a natural undeveloped state although certain improvements have been made on the southern slopes where equestrian paths have been installed and on the ridge where a view drive was constructed by the WPA, starting at Brazil and LaGrande Avenues.

Bay View Park has had no improvement since the first construction 16 years ago. The play area is run-down; the designated access roads have not been built and the existing paved road within the park has access only along a very poor dirt road.



III. EXISTING CONDITION OF AREA

Land Form

The hilly topography of the John McLaren Park - Candlestick Point area has been the chief obstacle to its development. City expansion usually follows the level and near level land first, leaving the hills unbuilt upon. Not only has this been the case in the area under study but, in addition, lack of definite public-ownership policies and poor subdivision layouts have retarded development. Basically, however, the hills have been the chief deterrent to development. These obstacles to development are shown on Plates 4 and 5.

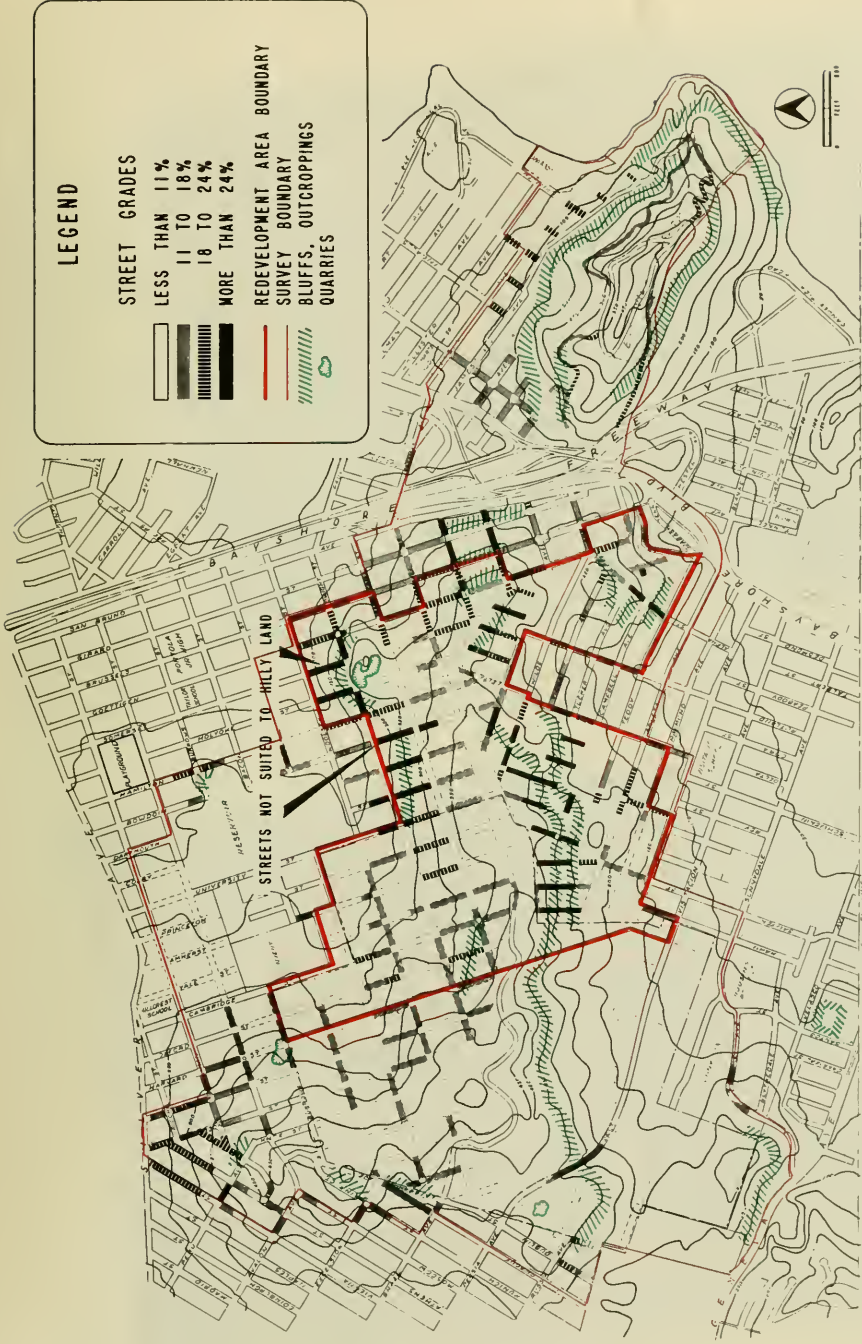
The area comprises a chain of hills rising from the bay at Candlestick Point and up a hogsback to an elevation of 450 feet at the summit of Bay View Park. From this summit the land falls away southerly at a uniform 40 percent slope to the Candlestick Cove war housing project and northerly, at from 15 to 30 percent slopes with abrupt changes in grade caused by quarrying.

Continuing westerly from Bay View Park summit one crosses the saddle through which the Bayshore Freeway passes and thence climbs to the main ridge of John McLaren Park, a mile to the westerly, to the high point over 525 feet. The sides of these hills are quite steep in places and access to the less hilly land on the heights has been difficult. The rocky ground on both sections is barren except for grasses and occasional outcroppings. Pine, cypress and eucalyptus trees have been placed here and there by original settlers, by the Park Department and by the WPA in the 1930's.

Climate

The climate is more agreeable than in most other parts of the city. There are more hours of sunshine during foggy days due to the protection afforded by the hills to the west, and on many days that are foggy downtown and to the west the fog does not reach the area at all. Winds are prevalent on high places, of course, but they are dissipated by the many trees. The promotion material published in 1867 stated descriptively:

"The University Homestead Association's land offers greater inducements to persons seeking desirable locations upon which to build homes, than does any other piece of land within the limits of the city or county of San Francisco. The land is high and catches the first rays of the morning sun as it sweeps over the Bay and alights upon University Mound: in every direction magnificent and pleasing prospects greet the eye."



Land Use

The area is principally used for single family dwellings, many having been built on two or more 25 foot lots. Most of these detached dwellings are older houses individually built with yards and gardens about them. More recent construction has been in 25 foot row houses put up by building contractors for sale purposes. Some of these row houses now being completed on University, Colby and Bowdoin Streets are on poorly graded lots with back yards subject to being washed away under wet weather and are located on streets with dangerous grades of over 26 percent. This is because of a street pattern unadapted to the steep slope of the hill.

There are some flats and apartments in the area but these are quite minor in number. Except for parts of Leland Avenue and San Bruno Avenue and isolated commercial uses, the entire area is zoned for single-family dwellings. There are a few scattered neighborhood grocery stores, but the larger shopping centers are at the junctions of major streets on the edges of the area - at Silver and San Bruno Avenues and at Bayshore Boulevard and Visitacion Avenue. The south side of Woolsey Street between University and Colby Streets was recently rezoned to permit commercial development as a neighborhood shopping center. Additional sites which may be needed for shopping centers after redevelopment takes place are shown on Plate 1.

The study area excludes the adjacent industrial section yet there are some miscellaneous uses within the area such as a truckyard, junk yard and a number of stables. However, these uses do not represent substantial investments and apparently are not very profitable business enterprises. Greenhouses and nurseries which cover many blocks on the protected northeastern slopes of John McLaren Park comprise an important use. Under the existing zoning ordinance, nurseries and greenhouses are permitted in single-family districts, and thus, these uses conform with existing law.

Streets and Utilities

The original subdivisions were laid out in a gridiron pattern with no recognition of natural ground forms. As a result many streets are no more than lines on paper and there is little possibility that they can be constructed because of their unnegotiable grades. Moreover, subsequent subdividers failed to tie their street patterns in with the older subdivisions, thus leaving certain streets that do not meet, and creating many awkward lot and block sizes. There are a number of scattered homes, small farms, nurseries and greenhouses located in the unimproved part of the area both inside and outside the present John McLaren Park boundaries. These inhabitants have in many cases ignored the platted streets (which exist only on maps) and have followed more realistic gradients on improvised roads in order to reach their property directly.



THE REDEVELOPMENT PLAN PROPOSES A NEW STREET LAYOUT OF EASY GRADES, THUS ENCOURAGING BETTER DEVELOPMENT.



Most of the streets going up steep slopes dwindle into unimproved roads. Some of these roads cause little difficulty in wet weather because of the rocky soil, while others become impassable. Recently streets have been paved up slopes having grades as steep as 26 percent requiring the most costly type of concrete pavement.

Within the official boundaries of John McLaren Park no residential street improvements have been made (See Plate 4) other than minor grading done by the inhabitants. There is, however, the WPA-graded summit road from Brazil Avenue and Gilligan Drive in the southern part of the park. No water lines or sewers have been installed in the park, the existing residences being served by wells and septic tanks. Many of the scattered dwellings on the fringes of the park similarly are served poorly.

Condition of Housing

The substandard housing indicated in the 1939 Real Property Survey and checked to date does not show buildings sufficiently deteriorated to attempt redevelopment for this reason alone. Although a few scattered old and makeshift buildings should be destroyed, most are merely old and can be rehabilitated economically. Many of the dwellings in the study area were erected before 1920. These included row houses on 25-foot lots, as well as the prevalent detached homes surrounded by gardens or farmyards and greenhouses.

Land Ownership

The John McLaren Park - Candlestick Point study area shows a preponderance of owner occupancy of homes. Many families have lived on large plots for over 50 years. In the vacant area, several large parcels belong to the "old settlers", and some have been broken up into small parcels. Many of these parcels of land are held by builders, real estate agents or grading companies who have been purchasing the various pieces of property during the last decade. The city owns considerable land in the area mainly for park and reservoir use and has designated over 55 acres for new school sites.

IV. EVIDENCE OF BLIGHT IN JOHN McLAREN PARK AREA

Referring to the definition of blight in the Community Redevelopment Act of California, Chapter 1326, Article 2, Section 2, that portion of the study area on the eastern end of John McLaren Park referred to below as "The John McLaren Park Area" may be characterized as "blighted" for the following reasons:

1. There exists in the area an "economic disuse." Over 70 acres net residential land (i.e. land excluding streets) has and will continue to remain idle and unused because of conditions described below. This constitutes an economic disuse and is the result of:
2. "Faulty planning." This is evident at the junctures of subdivisions where the street patterns are not coordinated and in the disregard of relationships of community facilities such as lack of proper access to John McLaren Park. The Park's boundary history, bearing no relationship to topography, or feasible street patterns, is also part of and has resulted in faulty planning.
3. "The subdividing and sale of lots of irregular form and shape and inadequate size for proper usefulness and development." In the John McLaren Park Area, the major fault of the subdivision design has been the disregard of the topography. The size and shape of the blocks, however, have not been well planned to meet the special needs of the hilly area, and the shape of some of the lots is awkward and impractical.
4. "The laying out of lots in disregard of the contours and other physical characteristics of the ground and surrounding conditions." As has been determined in previous studies this is one of the major blighting influences in San Francisco. The pattern of 25-foot lots is predominant in this area. The vacancy of such lots on steep hillsides is self-evident of economic disuse and indicates improper subdivision in terms of possible use and appeal of such lots to the public. In several sections of this area the grades are over 30 percent so that backyards would be cliffs after leveling space for the house. Lot layout has ignored steep grades, outcroppings of rocks, and cliffs.
5. "The existence of inadequate streets, open spaces and utilities".... In several sections of the area the residents have been forced to ignore platted streets and have attained access to their property only across adjacent vacant property. The quantity of unpaved streets and the lack of sewers or water mains is certainly an inadequacy that must be overcome.
6. "There exists in the area a.....lack of proper utilization.....resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land potentially useful and valuable....." Although real estate subdivision began in 1863 and the area was largely subdivided by 1907 there are several extensive sections which have never developed because of reasons listed above. Plate 1 shows arrested areas that can be made available for building through redevelopment. Thus, development in the area can be characterized as "arrested."

In consideration of the six specific points above, it is concluded that the John McLaren Park Area meets the definition of a "blighted area" as defined in the Community Redevelopment Act of California.

V. AREAS NOT RECOMMENDED FOR REDEVELOPMENT

The Candlestick Point area though included in the study has been omitted from consideration as part of a redevelopment area. Investigation shows that while there is some arrested development in the Candlestick Point - Bay View Park area it is unnecessary to have official action in order to put the area into use. It bears little relation to the proposed John McLaren Park Redevelopment area, as it is effectively separated by the wide right-of-way of the Bayshore Freeway. Its inclusion is not essential or desirable as part of the proposed John McLaren Park Redevelopment Area.

Bay View Park

Bay View Park is a hilltop composed of 30 acres rising over 400 feet above the water at Candlestick Point. The land is made up of gifts from Wm. H. Crocker and the Bay View Improvement Company. To these the city later added the lots formerly occupied by the city pest house. The land was dedicated for park purposes by the Board of Supervisors in 1915.

The park has been used very little, mainly because of its isolation and inaccessibility. It is separated by the Bayshore Freeway and Third Street heavy traffic and has no direct access road. Trees have been planted along its western limits by the WPA and a paved road also constructed within the park proper. However, the access road winds through a quarry and is unimproved and in poor condition.

Existing Conditions

The northerly slope of the hill from Bay View Park consists of about 60 acres which has been unsubdivided and vacant. Title to this land is held almost entirely by Dr. M. L. Montgomery who acquired it between 1932 and 1935. One parcel of about 3-1/2 acres is held by a title company. On the west summit is the radio station KYA transmitter and tower; otherwise, the land has been quarried by construction companies and is rather badly scarred.

The major factors retarding development of this vacant northerly slope are the costs of providing streets, sewers, and water, and the question of whether such installation should be paid for by the city or by the developer, wholly or in part.

This area, like the Sutro Forest area, might be considered blighted because of "lack of proper utilization resulting in....unproductive land." However, a tentative subdivision map was approved by the City Planning Commission on September 7, 1950 for development of this northerly slope. It therefore appears that the land will not remain vacant long.

Immediately east of Third Street, north of the above discussed vacant land (see area within study boundary, Plate 4) are several subdivided blocks designated as arrested or blighted on the basis of data from the 1939 Real Property Survey. Ownership is in individual or small groups of lots and is distributed among many persons. In these blocks, 13 of 26 acres are in use, mostly occupied by single dwellings with a half dozen flats and one gas station. The houses are relatively old, 65% of them having been erected before 1919, 22% between 1919-37 and 11% since. Half of these are considered 30%-49% substandard. On observation, the houses in general appear in fair condition, some rehabilitation having been effected. Many

have nice gardens and one-quarter are situated on two or more 25-foot lots; 40 percent are detached. Several blocks of streets toward the waterfront are not paved. Some excavation and quarrying has been done in the area.

While a number of old structures exist in these blocks it seems unnecessary at this time to designate the area for redevelopment in order to secure better use. If a developer felt that the demand for housing here warranted it, he could acquire title to the vacant land and build on it with little difficulty.

In view of the above it is not recommended that the area adjacent to the north of Bay View Park be designated as a redevelopment area at this time. While there may have been some "lack of proper utilization" of land in the area, it is believed that the Redevelopment Agency would not be in a much better position than private developers to put the vacant land into a more economic use.

VI. BOUNDARIES OF JOHN McLAREN PARK AREA

The Community Redevelopment Act of California defines a redevelopment area as follows:

Sec. 5. "Redevelopment area" means an area of a community which the legislative body thereof finds is a blighted area whose redevelopment is necessary to effectuate the public purposes declared in this act. A redevelopment area need not be restricted to, or consist entirely of, buildings, improvements, or lands which of themselves are detrimental or inimical to the public health, safety or welfare, but may consist of an area in which such conditions predominate and injuriously affect the entire area. A redevelopment area may therefore include lands, buildings or improvements which of themselves are not detrimental to the public health, safety or welfare, but whose inclusion is found necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area of which they are a part."

The boundaries of "The John McLaren Park Area" have been drawn to include an area whose planned redevelopment as a whole is necessary to effectuate the public purposes declared in the Community Redevelopment Act. That is, while blight predominates in the entire area the boundaries do include some non-blighted properties. These structures have been included in the proposed redevelopment area, since they may be affected or they may form part of the area necessary for adequate planning. However, not all properties included in the proposed redevelopment area would be acquired by the Redevelopment Agency. Several project areas may be designated within a redevelopment area and this could be done within the John McLaren Park Area. These project area plans would determine the exact parcels of property in each case that would be affected.

Four school sites have been included in the area. They are listed on page 20. It is essential that the site plans for these schools be coordinated with adjoining property and streets so that the schools will contribute as much as possible toward improving their respective locations.

Proposed Boundaries and Adjacent Land Use

A summary of approximate amounts of land proposed for various uses in and around John McLaren Park and in the John McLaren Park proper is given in the table following. The acreages given for the proposed new boundaries of John McLaren Park and the area of residential land that would become available from these changes are subject to further study and later determination. An aerial topographic survey of the whole park area is under preparation by the Department of Public Works. With this survey and further engineering information, it will then be possible to determine the exact alignment of the perimeter parkway and thus the park boundaries.

Proposed Boundaries and Adjacent Land Use

Area within study boundaries (see Plates 3, 4 or 5).....	1075 acres.
Area of proposed John McLaren Park Redevelopment Area....	318 acres.

New Residential Areas to be Created Through Redevelopment

Location (See Plate 1)	Size	Suggested Densities	Total Persons May be Housed
Northeast section (Now in McLaren Park)	22 acres	80 persons/acre	1700 persons
Two sections just north & east of high school site	18 "	55 " "	990 "
Campbell-Delta Sts. section	10 "	80 " "	800 "
Section just south of high school site	14 "	80 " "	1040 "
Teddy & Wilde Avenue section	3 "	55 " "	165 "
	4 "	80 " "	320 "
	71 acres		5015 persons

John McLaren Park (see Plate 3)

Total area within present official park boundaries	318 acres
Area owned by city including streets	262 acres
Total area within proposed park boundaries	288 acres
Net reduction in park area as proposed	30 acres
(See Department of City Planning report of January, 1950 on John McLaren Park for full information on change in park boundaries.)	

Proposed School Sites

Some minor modification in these proposed sites within the area is recommended as part of the location of the parkway bordering John McLaren Park and the relocation of Mansell Street. This is shown on Plate 1.

Total school sites within area	55 acres
University St. elementary school.....	5 acres
Southeast high school - Dwight St. to Mansell St.	22 "
Delta-Wilde home school	5 "
(Upper part - 1 acre - recommended for playground)	
Southeast jr. high school at Elliott and Raymond Sts.	13 "
School sites outside area:	
Persia Avenue jr. high school - within John McLaren Park	11 acres
Sunnydale elementary school	5 "



POOR PLANNING HAS RESULTED IN
BLIGHTING AND RETARDING DEVELOP-
MENT IN THIS AREA.



VII. THE REDEVELOPMENT PROCESS

The state law making it possible for local communities to undertake redevelopment is the California Community Redevelopment Act of 1945, as amended. This Act defines blight and sets up the machinery for its elimination within areas designated by the local governing body.

This process by which redevelopment is achieved is provided for in the Redevelopment Act. While the City Planning Commission plays a cooperative and active part, the major responsibility for redevelopment is entrusted to the Redevelopment Agency, established according to the Act by the Mayor and Board of Supervisors.

As provided in Section 33 of the State Act, the legislative body of the community may, by ordinance adopted by a majority vote of the entire membership, designate one or more areas within the community as a redevelopment area or areas. The Redevelopment Agency or Planning Commission may request the legislative body to designate such an area or areas for redevelopment.

Project areas may be designated within a redevelopment area and the state law further provides that cooperatively, the Planning Commission and Agency shall prepare preliminary and tentative plans for project areas. Following required public hearings the Board of Supervisors may adopt a tentative project plan for a project area. Approval of the tentative plan is followed by the Agency's preparation of a final redevelopment plan which also must be approved by the Board of Supervisors.

The Redevelopment Agency with its special powers has been called the "action arm of planning" and, of course, has been established to do only those things that private enterprise is unable to do. The Agency has been given the authority by state law to assemble land in blighted areas, using the power of eminent domain when necessary. Following approval of a redevelopment plan by the Board of Supervisors it may acquire property, raze buildings, and prepare the land for sale or lease to private enterprise for building. Before the Agency can acquire, however, present owners must be given the opportunity to sign up to participate in building according to the approved plan.

When the costs of acquiring blighted property are greater than the fair value for the land after any needed clearance and site preparation, the state act provides that the Agency may absorb such expense, with the aid of local and federal financial grants, before selling it back to private enterprise for rebuilding. In the case of an area of arrested development such as the John McLaren Park Area, however, it seems possible that redevelopment may so favorably affect land values that no local or federal grants will be needed.

It should be pointed out that in the designation of the John McLaren Park Redevelopment Area as shown on Plate 1, most of the existing houses would remain in their present ownership and condition. Relatively few existing structures would be affected. The presently vacant, unbuilt areas are the ones proposed for acquisition, replatting or re-subdividing and then for sale to private parties for building. The main purpose of redeveloping the area under the provisions of the Community Redevelopment Act is to make available for development those vacant lands presently lying idle.

VIII. CONCLUSION: OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REDEVELOPMENT AREA

The proposed redevelopment of the John McLaren Park Area would bring many benefits and advantages to the city as a whole. The city would gain over 70 acres for residential development now lying vacant and idle. John McLaren Park would have a definite, final policy established for its boundaries, access, and improvement. Thus the Park would become more usable to the residents of nearby residential districts and the whole city. The entire district around John McLaren Park would obtain a general stimulus and increase in value through an overall, planned development for an area the development of which has long been haphazard, scattered and retarded. These advantages and potentialities in redevelopment are described below in detail.

Better McLaren Park

John McLaren Park provides an important function. In a closely built, confined city like San Francisco, large open spaces are much needed to help the city compete with advantages offered by its suburbs. Yet these open spaces are costly and difficult to secure. With its 300 acres, the park is second in size and value as a recreation area only to the 1,000 acres of Golden Gate Park.

No large open areas reserved for public use are available to the Mission, Outer Mission, and Bayshore communities as Golden Gate Park and The Lake Merced Area are available to the Sunset, Richmond, and West of Twin Peaks communities. The existence of such large open spaces have been a marked factor in the stable development of those districts. Yet, these Mission and Bayshore communities are lower in income-group classification and higher in juvenile problems. In fact, it was the recognized need for additional recreation space in the southeast section of the city that in 1926 led to the proposal for creating John McLaren Park.

The Importance of Access

In order to be of value to the city as a whole, John McLaren Park should be made easily accessible, not merely by adequate street approaches but by a parkway system connecting this large recreational area with other similar areas in the city. This matter of access is similarly essential to the high school proposed just east of the park and to the adjacent residential areas.

The John McLaren Parkway is proposed approximately 4.5 miles in length to connect the park with the Lake Merced area and thence along the Great Highway and Sunset Boulevard to Golden Gate Park. One section of this, the extension of Stanley Drive under Junipero Serra Boulevard from the Lake Merced area to Alemany Boulevard is under construction.

A second means of access is recommended by extending the John McLaren Parkway to the Bayshore Freeway, utilizing a modified alignment of Mansell Street. From this point the Parkway would continue across Bayshore Freeway and Third Street to Bay View Park and the Bay. The total length of the John McLaren Parkway from Lake Merced Boulevard to the Bay would be approximately 7-1/2 miles. A minor parkway access could be developed to approach John McLaren Park from Alemany Boulevard on the north by widening and improving Cambridge Street.

These parkways are included in the Trafficways Plan of the Transportation Section of the Master Plan now pending adoption by the City Planning Commission. They are part of a network of freeways, thoroughfares, expressways and parkways proposed for better circulation in and about San Francisco and to and from the city.

New Residential Areas

The densities proposed for the new residential land that would be made available through redevelopment have been listed on Page 20. A low density of 55 persons per acre is proposed for one-third of the new area and a medium density of 80 persons per acre for the remainder. Approximately 5,000 persons could be housed, or at 3 persons per family about 1,000 to 1,500 new dwelling units might be built. The building types would range from detached single-family dwellings and row houses to duplexes and garden type apartments. It is possible and desirable to provide new housing accommodations of varied types and costs.

The new residential areas made possible by designation of the John McLaren Park Redevelopment Area can be very attractive because of several reasons. First, climatically - the southeastern part of the city has more fog-free days than other residential sections in San Francisco. Second, by a coordinated, overall plan of the area better neighborhoods with required community facilities can be provided. Adequate schools have been designated for the area and the proposed site plan (Plate 1) shows suggested locations for neighborhood shopping facilities.

In addition, the John McLaren Park area is located conveniently to places of employment and could provide space for new housing near defense industries. It is near Hunter's Point shipyards and industrial plants along the Bay and in South San Francisco. It is also near the Bayshore Freeway, the most direct and through traffic route to downtown San Francisco.

With the abundance of recreation space provided by adjacent John McLaren Park, and with schools, shopping facilities, convenience to employment area and a good climate, the John McLaren Park Area can attract new residents. The redevelopment process can assure the desirable development of this area in the near future.

Schools and Playgrounds

Four schools have been designated by the Board of Education for location in the area: a home school, an elementary, junior high and a high school. These are listed on Page 20 and are shown on Plate 1. This range of public schools for all levels will be an important factor in attracting families with school children as new residents. These four schools together with other proposed and nearby existing schools will give the entire area adequate and complete educational facilities for the proposed population.

The four school sites are each of adequate size for their respective type of school and conform to national standards for school sites. The proposed site plan as shown on Plate 1 indicates some modification in the high school and home school sites with frontages on Mansell Street. This will allow for better access to the schools and proper provision for the proposed John McLaren Parkway along Mansell Street. The junior high school site is likewise modified and made accessible by the perimeter road. The exact alignment of these roadways will have to be determined by subsequent detailed engineering survey.

Since all of the steep site may not be used all for school building, the upper portion of the proposed home school site at Delta Street and Wilde Avenue is suggested for use as a playground. Other neighborhood playgrounds of under an acre in size are proposed at Goettingen and Dwight Streets and between Tucker and Campbell Avenues. Even though the large acreage of John McLaren Park is within reasonable distance, the proximity and scale of a small neighborhood playground, especially for preschool children, provides the type of recreation space needed for nearby families.

New Shopping Centers

Except for a few scattered grocery stores there are no convenient neighborhood shopping facilities in the general area. Larger shopping centers are located at the junctions of major streets on the edges of the area - at Silver and San Bruno Avenues and Bayshore Boulevard and Visitacion Avenue but they are not close enough for daily shopping needs.

A neighborhood shopping center over one acre in size is planned at University and Woolsey Streets and undoubtedly will be constructed when sufficient homes are built nearby to justify its being a success. With additional population attracted to the area by creation of usable residential land and more homes being built, several other neighborhood shopping centers may be necessary. The proposed site plan (Plate 1) shows suggested general locations for these neighborhood stores.

Project Plans

There may be several project areas which can later be selected within a redevelopment area. Not until final redevelopment plans are adopted will it be known definitely how each piece of property will be affected. And not until final redevelopment plans are accepted by the Board of Supervisors can the Redevelopment Agency purchase property.

Before any redevelopment plan is adopted it must be revised and approved at several stages by the Planning Commission and by the Board of Supervisors. Public hearings must be held at least two times, and more often if necessary. Property owners and citizens will be kept informed of the plans and actions in redevelopment, and may express their opinions at the public hearings, or directly to the City Planning Commission and Redevelopment Agency.

Financial Considerations

No detailed financial analysis of the area has been made. However, from the general inspection of the area, and noting its possibilities as new residential property, it appears that redevelopment of the John McLaren Park Area might pay for itself. In other words, the amount invested in portions of the area to make the land available for private building might be returned to the city as private enterprise takes over the property again.

Furthermore, all properties acquired by the Redevelopment Agency would, when resold to private builders, be returned to the tax rolls in far better condition as taxable property than when originally acquired. That is to say, the new structures to be built would add several million dollars of assessable improvements, the taxes from which will pay for city services required by the area's new residents.

Main land

